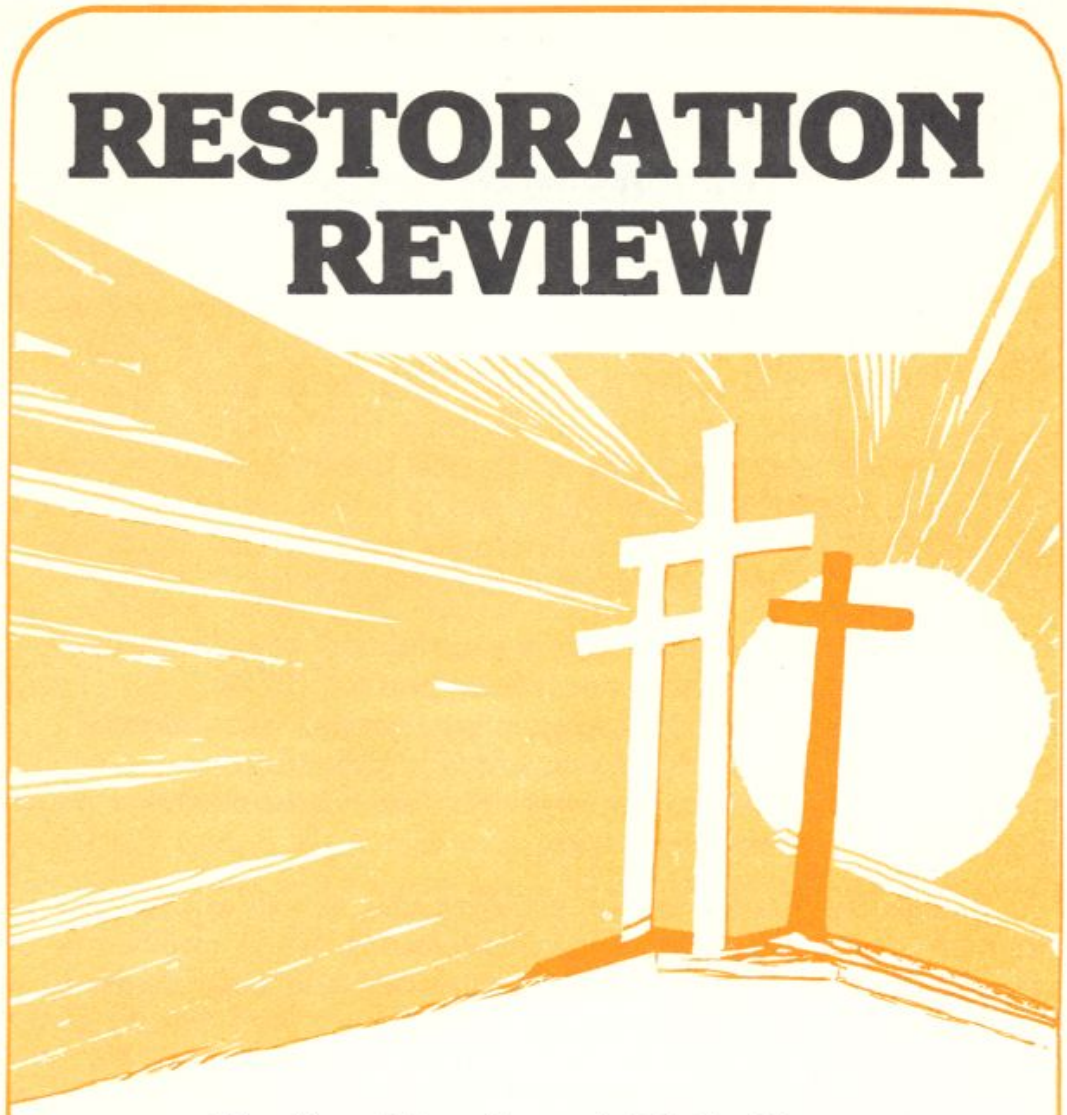
RESTORATION REVIEW



The Year They Executed John Brown

Tolbert Fanning sensed the depressive atmosphere of the church as the winds of frenzied division were being driven to gale force and intensity. But with God's help he would continue to plead for unity and peace and calm deliberation. Surely love could find a way. And love insisted, "We are one people!" — *Hazard of the Die,* p. 195

See *Tolbert Fanning: Peacemaker,* p. 125.

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Volume 21, No. 7 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **September 1979**

Blessed Are the Peacemakers . . .

THE PRESIDING JUDGE

As a committed believer you are to have a judge that rules within you, presiding over all the decisions you make. This judge is peace, the peace of Christ. This is clear from Col. 3:15, which in the Good News Version reads: "The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in one body." It is one of the great liberating truths, freeing us from selfish judgment and allowing peace to rule in our hearts. Peace as the presiding judge! What a transforming dynamic that is! It will be helpful to see how this is rendered in different versions.

"Let Christ's peace be arbiter in your hearts." (New English)

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." (RSV)

"May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts." (Jerusalem)

"Let Christ's peace direct your minds." (Schonfield)

"Let the peace of heart which comes from Christ be always present in your hearts and lives." (Living)

Phillips captures the beauty of the meaning as well as any: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, remembering that as members of the same body you are called to live in harmony, and never forget to be thankful for what God has done for you."

We are called to be peacemakers! It is as simple—and as profound—as that. God has not called us to be problems, agitators, and factionists, but peacemakers. We are called to live in harmony with each other, for that is what it means to be members of the same Body.

One of our Presidents was known to have a sign on his desk that read *The buck stops here,* which reminded him that *he* had to make the decision, even when he did not want to. Logicians assure us that all reflective thought is in reference to solving some problem. We may have things on our minds and we can jog our memories and ponder on many things, but whenever we think critically it is in order to solve some problem. Problem-solving. It is what life is about, and our world would be unfit for us if we did not have the challenge of problems, even if some of them seem impossible.

But all our decisions are in the hands of an arbiter or judge. The arbiter is often selfish pride, which means that all decision making revolves around self. One's own ego or self-will is the presiding judge, and so all decisions are for self esteem or bodily comforts.

The judge may be some outside force, and we are increasingly becoming a nation of "other directed" people, which Toynbee found to be a cause of the fall of the great empires of history. Some men who never grow up are still directed by their mothers, who cannot turn them loose. Others are "organization men" who learn to think as DuPont thinks or as IBM thinks. Career people in the military often so "belong to the Army" or to the Navy that a decision is hardly ever a free one. The authentic self is often lost in the morass of the masses, and thus what Kierkegaard, the father of existentialism, calls *the Crowd* becomes our presiding judge. The masses really make the decisions for the majority of the people, which Martin Buber, the philosopher who advised Ben Gurion, mournfully called *massification.*

Taking a page from Buber we might call a lot of the decision making among our congregations as *churchification.* "What would the other churches think about us?" is often the question of arbitration among our leaders. Or it may be a hangup on tradition—*We've never done it that way!* It isn't that our folk do not have a presiding judge, but that the wrong one is presiding.

I am not suggesting that a liberated believer is foot loose and fancy free. I do not believe in individualism. Protestantism's most grievous error has been its accent on individual and personal religion, to the neglect of the Biblical concept of community. To the contrary the Christian is free to be bound—to his family, to society, and most of all to Christ and his Body. The plain truth is that someone or something will preside as judge within us—a party, an institution, an ism, the crowd, or the self—and so we must decide if the wrong judge will be dethroned and the peace of Christ enthroned.

"No man is an island, entire of itself," wrote John Donne, "every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." He went on to say, "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

For the believer the question is not simply whether he is involved in mankind, but what resources he takes with him into that involvement. To be both sustained and constrained by the peace of Christ is the highest motivation. If he is in a tug of war with the evil forces, which is the figure in Gal. 5:17, he is not alone in the struggle, for he has a Helper. Moreover he has a goal, *peace*, for to this he has been called.

Self-reliance is a great American virtue, popularized by Emerson in an essay by that title; and it is, to be sure, a virtue that is getting away from us as Americans. But self-reliance is hardly a Christian virtue, unless carefully defined, for the believer knows all too well that no one can actually rely on self. We may love Emerson when he says, "It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but

the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude," but the believer is hesitant to place such emphasis on solitude. She knows that she is never really alone. It is better to say that in the midst of the crowd the Christian, with perfect sweetness, looks to the divine arbiter who rules from within, and thus cultivates peace in a troubled world.

Peace has its price tag, for it comes only by being waged. The most blessed peacemaker of all was crucified, and if peace is our business, it is to this that we have been called, we are likely to get hurt in the struggle. After all, the one who wrote, "Let the peace of Christ be the presiding judge in your heart," also testified of the apostles in their role as makers of peace, *We are fools for Christ.* The apostles were in fact under the sentence of death, a spectacle to the world. They went hungry, ill-clad, and homeless. They were not only slandered but were treated as the scum of the world (1 Cor. 4:9-13). Peacemaking is serious business. It may end at a cross, or in jail, or in disrepute. If the party or the crowd rules the heart, the decisions will be *safe.* If Christ is enthroned, the decisions may be *risky.*

"Set Christ apart in your hearts as Lord," 1 Pet. 3:15 tells us, which is something more than believing him to be the Son of God. God made him both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36 assures us, and he is both to us. He is to reign within us as Lord. His peace is the presiding judge.

This settles a lot of things in advance. We will not quarrel in our homes since the presiding judge rules for peace. We will not handle disagreement in the community of saints by dividing, for the ruling Christ within reminds us that we are called to peace.

Called to peace! We have not lately been that kind of people, but we can change. The change will come when we go to the ballot box of our heart and throw that rascal out that presides over our decisions. And install the right one.—*the Editor*

The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity,—*George Bernard Shaw*

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Highlights in Restoration History . . .

TOLBERT FANNING: PEACEMAKER

One fact alone makes Tolbert Fanning important in the history of Churches of Christ: he was the founder of the *Gospel Advocate* back in 1855. Those who know that fact may not realize that he was a prince of peace, a man who gave diligence to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, as the Scriptures instruct. When the debilitating Civil War, which destroyed Fanning's college and his home and drove him to actual hunger, forced him to shut down the *Advocate* for the duration, he wrote to a troubled brotherhood: "Brethren, we are one, and have but one work to perform."

Adaptability was among his virtues. Even when he did not endorse a practice or point of view, he managed to preserve brotherhood nonetheless. Adamantly opposed to the pastor system and the salaried minister and never practicing it himself, he stood by the church in Nashville when they decided, against his own pleading, to adopt the pastor system and hire the popular Jesse B. Ferguson as their pastor. Fanning pointed out that the church had grown to 500 members (half white and half black!) in ten years without a hired preacher. So *why* hire a preacher?, he would ask. Within a few years Ferguson had many in the church following him instead of the Lord, and if ever a preacher wrecked a church Ferguson wrecked the church in Nashville. The membership dropped to 50 members, the church had trouble retrieving the property that Ferguson, by then a dispenser of black magic, had taken over, and the building was at last burned to the ground!

All his life Fanning looked back on the calamity and would say, *Remember Nashville and Lot's wife!*

He was a giant of a man, standing six feet six and weighing well over 200 pounds, all brawn. He had such strength that at barn raisings he would man one corner by himself. Born in 1810, he was a pioneer farmer as well as pioneer preacher. When he first began to preach his friends told him to his face that his chances of success were hopeless, but he was soon holding audiences spellbound by his plain and simple manner of presenting the Scriptures. He baptized large numbers in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi and founded many churches. Nashville was his base of operation, and it was there that he started the *Gospel Advocate* after having edited the *Christian Review* for a decade. As with most of the pioneers, he had printer's ink in his veins.

While he was not educated at Campbell's college, he did travel with the reformer and was influenced by his views on education, which found expression in his own college, Franklin College, which stood where Nashville's airport is now located. Always uneasy with the idea of a clergy system, he made his school strictly liberal arts, leaving it to the

Franklin church to train preachers, which was an important part of his ministry. Fanning's church and school produced many of the leaders of the southern church, including David Lipscomb. He taught his preachers to be able to support themselves, and so he made blacksmiths, shoemakers, and saddlers of them as well as evangelists. He always opposed a fixed salary for preachers, supposing it promoted indolence.

Since he died in 1874 he was not around for "the eye of the storm" in the controversy over instrumental music, but he said enough to put it in the same class with choirs, fancy church buildings, and hired preachers. Since he was in search for "the perfect pattern," which no party in his view had attained, he was always questioning the innovations as they emerged. This passion for a fixed pattern made the Movement vulnerable to dissension and division, for no two people could agree on the details of the pattern.

Like J. W. McGarvey, who was also adamantly opposed to the organ, Fanning found a missionary society in the pattern in that the churches of the New Testament cooperated. While it is not generally realized among our people, the Churches of Christ in Tennessee before the Civil War were more organized than in any other southern state. As early as 1842 they had 29 churches in a cooperative for evangelizing the state, with the church in Nashville serving as the agent "to receive, manage, and disburse all funds that may be collected."

In supporting such cooperative efforts Fanning adopted a principle of interpretation that has never been accepted by our more conservative brethren, even though he falls within that tradition. The rule he followed was: *Since the Scriptures teach that churches should cooperate, human judgment or worldly wisdom must dictate the methods employed.* This led him to accept the vice-presidency of the American Christian Missionary Society, as well as an office in a Bible society.

But he soon became disenchanted with such societies and became one of their severest critics, not that he ever objected to them *per se*, but that they became ecclesiastical and functioned arbitrarily as bodies apart from the church. It did not help any when the ACMS in "war resolutions" branded southerners as "armed traitors" and called upon all churches to support the Union.

It was here that Fanning showed himself a Christian gentleman and a peacemaker. He sensed that a division was coming in Disciple ranks and sought to avoid it. In spite of his objections, he continued to enjoy fellowship with the "Society brethren," as they were now being dubbed. He attended the annual meeting of the ACMS in 1859 and was again with such stalwarts as Raccoon John Smith, Moses E. Lard, Benjamin Franklin, Walter Scott, D. S. Burnett, and Samuel and John Rogers. He wanted to warn them of the direction he

thought the society was going, but Isaac Errett, who was presiding, was just as eager that he remain quiet.

Fanning's chance came when he was called upon to report on the work in Tennessee. While he conceded that the missionary society did much good, the church as "the pillar and ground of the truth" is all the society that is needed. They were now doing well in Tennessee without such an organization, he told them. But he also spoke of love and peace and unity among brethren. It must have been impressive when the big guy from Tennessee, disagreeing with them as he did, concluded his remarks with these words of reconciliation, "But I am happy to say, that from what I have heard from the floor, we are one people."

We have here more than an episode in the life of a leading pioneer minister, for it reveals how tenuous the fabric was that held a unity movement together. It only needed a more belligerent and bombastic spirit than the gentle and loving Tolbert Fanning to make pieces of it instead of peace. Such leaders were sure to come. Fanning seemed to have understood the nature of unity, for he saw that men can differ, even substantially, and still be brothers and work and worship together. If unity means agreement on such issues as societies and music, then the movement never was united.

The Civil War was brutal to our southern brother, not only because of injustices brought upon him for his pacifism, but also because it reduced him to poverty, destroying both his home and his college. This was compounded by misunderstandings with Campbell and Richardson at Bethany, causing him to regret that he ever started a college or edited a paper. It is one more instance of how our "editor bishops" have had a hard time getting along with each other.

When he saw South Carolina secede from the Union, then Mississippi, then Alabama, he knew that life would never be the same in the South. It was 1861 and due to the crisis he shut down his *Gospel Advocate* for the duration. His parting words were, "Brethren, we are one, and we have but one work to perform." It was an appeal that has been heard but dimly all these years.—*the Editor*

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Pilgrimage of Joy. . . No. 37

THE CUTTING EDGE

W. Carl Ketcherside

The advent of 1961 brought with it what might be the highest level yet attained in the discussion of fellowship. Of course, as we later honed our thinking, we were able to present the cutting-edge of it more fully. But I was writing on the theme with a great deal of power and brethren were anxious to hear of it. It was evident that it was an idea whose time had come. It was now ten years since I had my spiritual encounter in Ireland, and I had returned home to investigate the revelation of God's divine purpose in my life with fresh insights.

I was booked for meetings from coast to coast. In everyone of these I invited questions from the audience. So new was what was being said that the queries were many. This proved to be the most interesting and exciting part of the studies. As an illustration I will refer to a meeting in Sullivan, Indiana. The restoration movement there was fractured into four separate groups. I was invited by the smallest. The little building had standing-room only on Saturday night and on Sunday afternoon we moved to the Four-H Club building where there were 42 congregations and 14 preachers in attendance. And this was in the dead of winter, on January 14 and 15.

During the next two years I crossed and re-crossed the country. The Missouri Christian Lectureship, a powerful forum in earlier days, was revived by Grayson Ensign, president of Moberly Christian College. I spoke on "The Ground of Christian Fellowship." The speech has since appeared in a book and has been reproduced in a couple of booklets. It represented my most complete treatise on the subject up to that time.

Of special significance was an invitation to come to Louisville. It was issued by two congregations but was held at Kentucky Avenue Church building. It was my first appearance among brethren of the pre-millennial persuasion. Brother E. L. Jorgenson was still alive and it was my pleasure to meet him and to come to know him. The pre-millennial brethren had always been known for their freedom and openness toward others. I was well received arid mutual love bridged any difference that existed. Later that year I went to Southeastern Christian College at Winchester, Kentucy, and spoke to the student body and friends of the college who came. We had a beautiful relationship and I returned to the college upon other occasions in the future.

As a result of these encounters I was invited to come to Shawnee Church in Louisville, where I held a meeting later in the year. Willis Allen was the minister and he proved to be a fine man and a great brother in the Lord. Through these contacts I came into contact with the brethren at Portland School and with those who carried on *The Word and the Work.* I became quite convinced that they had been misrepresented and unmercifully ill-treated by preachers of the dissenting view.

Not everything was rosy, however. It was during this year that Brother Roy Loney launched a new little journal called *The Gospel Message*. It was intended to provide a medium for those who thought I had departed from the faith. It did not create a new party but served to perpetuate an old one. Brother Loney had been invited to speak in Saint Louis in years gone by and he did his best to divide the brethren in Saint Louis and to gain a foothold. He wrote to a number of the brethren making false accusations and insinuations, but the letters were generally handed to me and his efforts came to naught. The brethren who wrote to him were sympathetic because of his deafness and he took their sympathy for this to be sympathy with his divisive attitude. It was not.

One thing of especial interest that occurred during this time was arranged by Jim Mabery. He was a great brother and ardent for the work of Christ. Brethren arranged to celebrate my fortieth anniversary of preaching the Word with a "This is Your Life" presentation at Green Parrot Inn, in Saint Louis County. Old friends attended I had not seen for years. A special recording for the session was sent by Brother Winstanley and some of the saints in Great Britain. Our children and their companions sang special numbers. There were several hundred present for the event and it was a thrilling experience master-minded by a professional. Anything Jim arranged was sure to be a success, and he had working with him his good wife, Ina Lee.

During the year word was received of the death of Walter Crosthwaite in Great Britain, on May 23. He passed across the Jordan at Ulverston, in Lancashire, and with his going I lost a precious friend and sensed the closing of an era. His noble stand for the purity of the gospel had earned for him the burning hatred of some, but the warm friendship of others. I cherish the memory of the time spent in his cheerful little home more than anything else which happened on my journey to England.

He was unshakable in his convictions and those who grew up at his feet were fortunate indeed. He spanned the time when the church was beginning to go off the deep end over the compromise with "liberal theology" and saw it become affiliated with the World Council. He was the leader of the Old Paths Brethren who resisted the drift of the tide.

God needed such a man for such a time and raised him up. He and Levi Clark had a profound impression upon my life. I will never forget my association with them.

During the year I also went to Lakewood, California, for a meeting with the congregation there, which was ably shepherded by Bro. Bill Jessup. Lakewood was established by Ernest Beam, a pioneer in the attempt to unite the forces of the restoration movement. In my ignorance and the party spirit I had opposed his effort. He was hounded and harassed by men infinitely smaller than himself during his life and probably died with

a broken heart, feeling that his efforts were a failure. They were not, of course, for the planting of the seeds of freedom is never a loss.

I studied his work intensely when I began to realize the merit of it and came to the conclusion he had made two mistakes in his method of going about it. I resolved to avoid those mistakes. Our meeting lasted five nights from October 16-20. More than 400 attended every meeting, crowding the little building to standing-room only. Every evening we had prayers for unity in a little room just off the patio. Some evenings the room was virtually full. The Vernon Brothers sang for the meeting. It was my first occasion to meet them. Harold. Clark led the congregational singing. A busload of fifty came from Pepperdine College every night. The question periods each day were very lively. Some questions were earnest attempts to find a solution. Some preachers asked things only to disrupt. But God was with me and I found a ready answer for all.

It was about this time that Reuel Lemmons unleashed an attack upon me in the *Firm Foundation.* An excellent editorial writer and a man of tremendous ability, generally when he assailed a person in print, which he did very rarely, that person curled up and played dead. It is an outstanding phenomenon of the restoration movement how much power is centered in editors. A withering blast from one of them and you have had it. Brother Lemmons entitled his editorial in which he named me several times, “Blind in One Eye.”

This time it did not work. It seemed rather to publicize my effort to bring sanity to a body intent upon consuming itself. Thousands heard of me who did not know me before. I received scores of letters, many of them from Texas. It was apparent that many people were fed up with the sterile “status quo” and the establishment for which Brother Lemmons was one of the chief spokesmen. There was a grassroots yearning to become free from the domination of a self-imposed clergy group. An articulate coterie of brilliant young people was beginning to form which would make itself heard and felt.

The work was given impetus by a “Concourse Toward Unity” held at Denver, Colorado, July 1-7, which was attended by 500 people from 21 states, Mexico and the Philippines, to discuss the problems we faced in order to be united. M. F. Cottrell was one of the speakers. He fired the audience with new hope. Man after man spoke on the subject in a dynamic way. When it became apparent that there was a unity or purpose one of the congregations sent for C. E. McGaughey to come. He made a stereotyped speech demanding agreement upon matters of opinion and stating there could be no unity without conformity. When he finished he knew that he had made a miserable failure.

Brother Cottrell and I invited him to have lunch with us. He reluctantly accepted. Brother Cottrell told him that he needed to come into the twentieth century and get off his hobby horse. Brother McGaughey said he intended to ride the horse right up to the gates of

heaven. Brother Cottrell told him that if he did a voice from inside the gate would tell him to tie his horse outside and come on in. There would be no hobbies in heaven. Conditions were changing when brethren from every segment of the movement could share together in love as they were doing there.

It was this year I was first invited to come to camp at Macrorie, Saskatchewan. Paul Tromburg was laboring at Outlook and I had visited the work there. At the time the men met in the daytime, but the evening meetings were open to the sisters. The camp has since changed and is now a Family Camp with more than 200 registered. Back in those days it was heavily weighted with people from the non-instrument Churches of Christ, but it now involves about half of those who use the instrument and the other half of those who do not. It is sponsored by a congregation which has no instrument but does not make a test of fellowship out of it. The question is never mentioned by any speaker and causes no problem. It is a tremendous annual affair which brings together in a primitive setting brethren from almost every province in Canada, as well as from several states. I have returned almost every two years since that time and have seen great strides in our reception of one another in Christ. The interesting thing now is to see people from various other backgrounds coming and being treated with love.

On September 17-21 I was invited to Rosemead, California, for a fellowship forum by Robert E. Hanson. The house was packed every night. One evening two carloads of brethren drove in. They sat together around Glenn Wallace. When I had finished my speech, Brother Wallace arose and said I had insulted the Lord’s church of which he was a member and he demanded an opportunity to reply. It shocked the audience. They could not think of anything I had said which could be so interpreted. I arose slowly, walked to the speaker’s stand and looked at Brother Wallace for a long time with a smile upon my face. You could have heard a pin drop. I told him that if he felt offended he should be given an opportunity to reply, and that next afternoon he could do so for fifteen minutes.

The building was crowded to capacity the next day. I introduced Glenn and told the audience he had a few things to say. He put on quite a show, pounding the organ with his fist and declaring it was the real problem. When he finished his harangue, I simply ignored him, and arose and quietly said, “It is now time for questions from the audience. Who will be first, please?” Brother Wallace bounced out of his seat and asked if I was going to answer him. I said, “No, I do not find anything which requires an answer, so we will proceed according to our regular format.”

He and the seven others who came with him stalked out, murmuring something under their breath as they went. We proceeded with the meeting.

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LET US ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER

Dan Rogers, III

(Since this piece was rejected by a "non-cooperative" journal that had described the author as a liberal who had departed from the faithful, I thought you would be interested. It is one more sign of the changing scene, even among our extreme right wing.—*Ed*.)

Today the body of Christ stands divided. Surely no one will deny this deplorable fact!

Paul's description of the division in the congregation at Corinth in the first century describes the division in the body of Christ today. As he points out in 1 Corinthians 1:12, then the saints were divided into factional groups centered around preachers, with one faction claiming to be followers of Paul, while two other factions were following Apollos and Cephas respectively, and to top it all off, there was even a fourth faction claiming to be followers of Christ.

Today, the factional spirit which was so evident in the congregation at Corinth in the first century, not only continues to exist, it thrives. Brethren variously belong to such factional groups as the non-institutional faction, the one cup faction, the non-Sunday school faction, the premillennial faction, the instrumental music faction, and the mainline (institutional) faction, to mention only a few. As was the case in Corinth then, so it is now that the end result of all this factionalism is "quarrels" among brethren (l Cor. 1:11).

Today, as the battle lines are drawn between the various factions, the names quickly begin to fly: "Liberal," "Anti," "Legalist," "Libertine," "Institutionalist," and "False Teacher," to mention only a few. The members of each faction go out to do battle with and slay the foes of some other faction, all the while claiming to be simply doing what God has required of them, contending earnestly for the faith (Jude 3).

But wait a minute! Something seems to be so terribly wrong! Is each faction really contending for the faith, or is it being contentious for its particular interpretation of the faith, which mayor may not be correct? Rather than speaking what we believe to be truth in love (Eph. 4:15), it seems that there is a biting and devouring, and a provoking and envying of one another (Gal. 5:15, 26). Instead of fighting against Satan and the forces of sin—instead of fighting against "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12)—we fight each other. Rather than being concerned about taking the gospel to the lost, like the Pharisees who traveled over land and sea to make one proselyte (Matt. 23:15), so we spend much of our time and effort in trying to convert someone from an opposing faction. Indeed, we seem to rejoice more over a brother who is proselyted from

an opposing faction to our particular faction, than over ninety-nine lost sinners who move in obedience to Christ (Heb. 5:9).

Brethren, it is past time that we stopped fighting each other, and started fighting our common enemy, Satan. We need to forget about proselyting brethren out of one faction and into another, and start thinking about converting the lost to Christ. It is time that we forgot about our factional parties and started thinking about God's house, the family of believers (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10). It is time we broadened our circle of fellowship from just our own particular faction, whatever it may be, to include all that are in the circle of God's Fatherhood.

As Jesus so warns in Mark 3:25, "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." Today, God's house, the body of Christ, is divided against itself, and will continue to be as long as we continue to promote factionalism. Factionalism is one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). It is sin, and those who practice this sin "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21).

Therefore, let us turn from the sin of factionalism. In the words of Abraham to Lot, let us recognize that, "We are brethren" (Gen. 13:8). As brethren, let us conduct ourselves toward each other as the Bible teaches that brethren should. In spite of our differences, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification" (Rom. 14:19). "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another . . ." (Rom. 13:8). Let us ". . . be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Eph. 4:2). Indeed my brothers and sisters in Christ, let us put aside our factions, and let us "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" (Rom. 15:7).

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WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO PROPHECY?

The witness that Jesus gave is *the same as the spirit of prophecy.* Rev. 19:10

I read something disturbing recently about the Churches of Christ in an unlikely place. The *Bibliotheca Sacra* is a time-honored journal published by Dallas Theological Seminary. It has a unique feature in that it runs reviews of articles that appear in other journals. In its Jan-March issue for 1979 it reviewed an article by David R. Reagan, preaching minister to the Central Church of Christ in Irving, near Dallas, which appeared originally in *Word and Work*, longtime respected journal of the premillennial persuasion

among Churches of Christ. I read the article when it first appeared in the Louisville publication, but it was the review of it that especially interested me—and disturbed me.

Entitled "My Pilgrimage Toward a Premillennial Viewpoint," David Reagan tells how he became premillennial through independent study. He began his study by outlining the Book of Revelation, only to discover later that his outline was premillennial. He describes postmillennialism as humanistic and amillennialism as a spiritualization of Scripture that actually denies what the Bible says. Premillennialism is the most attractive theory in that it allows the Bible to mean what it says, though he has misgivings about some of the more speculative theories of this persuasion.

All this held such interest to the readers of *BibSac* that the *Word and Work* office in Louisville chose to put the article in pamphlet form so as to meet the demand for the article. David himself has likewise had responses from here and there, one being from the president of the Dallas seminary, who thought it remarkable that someone in the Churches of Christ, known for their rather rigid anti-premillennial posture, should become premillennial through private study. This would be of special interest to both the seminary and *BibSac* in that they are not only premillennial, but dispensational as well, an aspect of the doctrine that Reagan rejected in the article, and which the president defended in his letter.

All this is well enough. It is not this that disturbed me. We have had premills among us at least since the second century, including some of our own pioneers of the Stone-Campbell tradition. Who else but Moses E. Lard! And who could be more loyal than old Moses, whom Campbell chose to answer J. B. Jeter's scathing attack, *Campbellism Examined?*

What disturbed me is something David Reagan said in the article that I did not especially notice until it was quoted in the review. When the reviewer gave it special notice, I was forced to face up to the raw truth of it. Here is part of what the review said:

"The Churches of Christ (of which this periodical is a voice) have historically held an amillennial eschatology, even though there is and has been a premillennial group within the fellowship. Reagan represents a departure from traditional Church of Christ theology, therefore, and the publication of his article in this magazine is surprising . . . The author confesses that he 'received almost no teaching concerning God's Prophetic Word when I was growing up in the church,' a fact that is not surprising in amillennial circles."

It does not bother me for an "outsider" to note that our folk differ on the millennium, for who doesn't? But when he can say—and tell the truth—that it is not surprising that we virtually ignore God's prophetic word, putting us in the class with all others who ignore

that precious part of Scripture, *that* bothers me. How it should quicken us when our bright young men, who are moving into the leadership of our churches, tell us in no uncertain terms that we failed to teach them the whole counsel of God. It is of course a serious indictment. It should cause us to ponder the question, what *have* we done to prophecy? If we have *ignorantly* ignored prophecy, that is bad; if we have *wilfully* ignored it, that is inexcusable.

When David Reagan was growing up in the Churches of Christ he says he received "almost no teaching" on prophecy. Our many readers who have grown up in those same churches will, I suspect, confirm that verdict. It may even be worse than that, for we have almost cultivated an indifference, if not antagonism, to anything prophetic. I recall one of our ministers waving aside the Book of Revelation as an impossible exercise, as something no one can really make sense of, except perhaps in spots and patches. This is a common view among us. Consequently *Revelation* is virtually ignored. If it should suddenly disappear from the Bible, our folk would make it just fine, for we pay it no mind anyhow. *Acts* we know and Paul's epistles we know, but who is *Revelation?*

And what do we know about Isaiah or Jeremiah or Ezekiel or Zechariah or Daniel? Where among us are these books ever *seriously, searchingly* studied? Are they even read in our assemblies? Can our most respected teachers give a connected description of what is in these books, their themes, their great messages? Are we neglecting those who were hailed "my servants, the prophets." And what *does* the Bible mean when it assures us that "The witness that Jesus gave is the same as the spirit of prophecy."

This is probably part of what the angel, serving in the role of a prophet in Rev. 19, is saying to the apostle, explaining that the witness of Jesus was in them both alike, in the angel as a prophet and in John as an apostle, and so John should not be bowing down to the angel. This places the role of the prophet alongside that of an apostle, and it shows that the witness of Jesus is in prophecy as well as in the apostolic writings. 1 Pet. 1:10-12 holds prophecy in reverence, noting that "their prophecies were about the grace which was to come to you." He says further that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets and that they foretold not only the sufferings of Christ but also "the glories that would come after them," that is, after the sufferings.

We are aware of the prophetic predictions of Christ's sufferings, but what attention have we given to the prophecies about the glories following Jesus' passion? The apostle Peter says the prophets searched diligently about "the grace which was to come to you." Surely we should make more of their diligent efforts than we have.

Since the New Testament makes so much of prophetic teaching, we should persuade ourselves that, with prayerful commitment, we *can* understand prophecy and teach it to our people. We tend to be turned off by references to wheels, wings, and plumb-lines, but if the Spirit of Christ was in these servants and if they spoke of the grace that is for us, we must not allow ourselves to be mislead into neglecting what at first appears obscure and difficult, but which in the end bring us great joy.

We might test ourselves by a few references. Take Zech. 14 where it is said that a day is coming in which the Lord will gather all nations to war against Jerusalem. “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,” the prophet says as he describes an end-time battle and the ultimate new order in Jerusalem. If this is Messianic, as is usually conceded, what does it refer to? While Jesus’ crucifixion is referred to earlier in the prophecy (Zech. 12:10) according to In. 19:37, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced,” this reference to his standing on the Mount of Olives can hardly refer to anything that has already taken place. This is because the setting is a war involving many nations, and a renewal of Jerusalem is to follow. Moreover, “the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge gorge.” Clearly no such thing has yet transpired. To “spiritualize” this in some such way as to make these facts other than what is rather plainly stated is to render the Scriptures meaningless.

For our people to be uncertain as to what all this may mean is excusable, but to *ignore* such passages, treating them as if they were not even in the Scriptures, is to be unfaithful to the prophetic word.

Take some of the promises in Isaiah, who is called “the great evangelical prophet.” He anticipates a time when “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea,” and if one carefully reads Isa. 11 where that appears she will see that the prophet is describing such a reign of peace and victory for God’s kingdom as the world has not yet known. Is this not an important part of God’s word to us? What are we doing with it?

I was in a gathering of Church of Christ ministers in Dallas sometime back in which Romans 9-11 was under consideration, and even that was rare, for those chapters have not meant much to us, perhaps because they are largely prophetic. I was amazed at the irresponsibility with which these chapters were treated. The prophecy in 11:26, “And so all Israel shall be saved,” was made to refer to the occasional conversion of a Jew (to the Church of Christ of course!), which is to negate the apostle’s argument in these chapters, as well as to ignore plain English. Paul even tells the reader *when* all Israel will be saved —“when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” I remembered my days at Harvard when the impious A.D. Nock, who could not have cared less about *any* millennial theory, was

asked if he understood that Paul looked to the conversion of the Jews in these chapters. *Apparently so, apparently so,* he bellowed out in his brusque way. I would agree that it is apparent, at least that!

But when a people has its mind made up as to certain prophetic themes—such as God having a plan for the Jews as a people or nation—then its method has to be eisegesis and not exegesis, which is to read *into* the text one's preconceived notion rather than to read *out* of the text what is already there. But this can be a painful ordeal for one who otherwise insists that we should take the Bible for what it says and allow the Scriptures to interpret themselves. So it is better simply to ignore a large portion of Scripture. Perhaps it *is* better to ignore Scripture than to twist it.

We can and must improve ourselves in reference to "the scriptures of the prophets" (Rom. 16:26). We must read them more as we pray for guidance of the Spirit. We must teach them more, not dogmatically of course, but openly and freely, allowing the Scriptures to lead us where they will, ignoring all fear of labels and brands. And read them more in our assemblies. One book of prophecy holds out a distinct blessing to the one who reads it publicly and to those who will hear it in reverence and obedience (Rev. 1:3).—*the Editor*

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BOOK NOTES

We offer again to our readers a highly readable. concise history of the early church. It starts with Greek and Roman backgrounds and goes on to discuss the life of the primitive community, the persecutions, the heresies such as Gnosticism and Marcionism, the forming of the canon, and on to emperors like Constantine and leaders like Augustine. *A Short History of the Early Church* at 184 pages is not too short to tell the story, but it is all lean. 3.55 postpaid.

Carl Ketcherside's *Colony of Heaven* is a treatment on spiritual and social values drawn from Philippians, which was described by Paul as "a colony of heaven." Most of it is "A Letter from the Ambassador," which puts the entire letter in the context of our own age and problems. 3.60 postpaid.

One of our favorite "Barclay's," which is a common reference in our community, is his lesser known *Daily Celebration*, which is a two-volume set at 6.95 for vol. 1 and 5.95 for vol. 2. They are a collection of his wisdom, wit, illustrations, anecdotes, and admonitions drawn from many sources, designed for short readings and ideal as a beside set. You will profit by opening a volume anywhere and start reading.

Have you ever wondered how the Temple service and ritual were conducted in the time of Christ? *The Temple* by Alfred Edersheim is an old book but a classic, and it is now available at only 4.55 postpaid. It not only tells you all about the Day of Atonement but even what went on at the Temple at night, and it is all tied to the Biblical story.

For any of you who would like to know what we have been saying for years, we will still send you 18 back issues, selected at random from a decade or more ago, as well as more recent numbers, for only 3.00. Also available is our *The Ancient Order*, the bound volume for 1978, at 5.50.

Some recent best sellers that we again have in stock are: *Do Yourself a Favor: Love Your Wife*, which, believe me, can change your life and home (3.55); *The Fat is in Your Head* is not a lecture to overweights, but the odyssey of a man who lost a ton and found a new life style (2.85); *The Mormon Papers* which examines the cult by their own documents, and very effectively, like a kind, skillful surgeon (3.55). Prices are postpaid.

When they were being republished I bought some sets of Barton Stone's *Christian Messenger* and can make you a good price. It is only for those who plan exensive research in the early years of our Movement. Please write if you are interested.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I passed copies of *Body Ministry: Then and Now* to all of the board members and there is unanimous consensus that this is where we want to go. We are assessing where we are now and what preparation or steps we need to implement. Plans now are to start an intensive Bible-study, prayer-time, and memory-work group with willing leaders who are FAT (faithful, available, and teachable) with Body ministry the goal.—*Rob Blakely, Broadway Christian Church, Bellingham, WA*

(We will send you 12 copies of this handout for 1.00. We believe it will give your people a new vision of what is possible, whether the ideas are implemented or not.—*Ed.)*

I have been following with interest brother Ketcherside's *Pilgrimage of Joy,* especially his visits to England. Many of the people he mentions are long gone to their reward, but there are others who are still actively involved with the Lord's people in this land. I am working with a fine congregation of God's people here in England, and I just keep preaching the word and watching us all grow. Even though I don't agree with all that you write, I have yet to meet someone that agrees with all that I say, so I guess we will just have to love and grow up into Him who is the head.—*Michael Gaunt, Corby, England*

I believe our Lord is working to bring together all those who have committed themselves to Him and at the same time He is refining and purifying our beliefs and our fellowship—*Joe and Sue Schaelling, Wichita Falls, TX.*

The Presbyterians gave the movement two of its finest sons, Thomas and Alexander Campbell. So, it might be a beautiful Christian spirit that the Churches of Christ, after all these years, "gave" one of her fine, intelligent sons to the Presbyterians! Who could find fault with that sort of repayment for all the Presbyterians have given the Restoration Movement!—*Talmadge McNabb, Pemberton, NJ*

Man was created in the image of God and as a caretaker of the world and a companion of God. He was not created to be a husband or a father. But here was God's first disappointment in creation: it was not good that man be alone. So God formed woman, taking from the creation, man and the world to make her. Then God looked upon his creation in general and said it was excellent. The point is that God corrected his "single" creation into a dual, and then it was excellent.—*Mary Ann*

(If the sister who wrote this will communicate to me her name and address, I can respond. The article and letter she sent had only her first name and no address. - *Ed.)*

It has taken some of us longer than others to learn that you don't have to dislove if you disagree. It is a lot more fun this way. - *Jerry Ward, Castle Rock, Co*

It has been a blessing to live with two bears for awhile. How blest we would be if we would all live with these two instead of being as cross as a bear with each other (Eph. 4:31).—*Franklin Bixler, Long Beach, CA*

You may not have seen this (enclosed). I read it with mixed emotions, and my thought was: how many "denominationalists" will be converted by this tirade? Can't we approach them in love and concern rather than with condemnation and bitterness.—*Clark Sloneker, Arlington, SD*

Having worshipped with the non-instrument group for 30 years and with the instrumental group about as long, the instrument has no bearing whatever in my service to God. I liked the article you wrote in which you said the human voice is a beautiful instrument

that the organ often drowns out. I also enjoyed reading about your Upper Room church in Denton. I visited a Church of Christ in Ontario, Oregon that is much the same. They hired a coordinator rather than a minister. They have so much talent that they take turns preaching, with the full-time minister taking his turn, who also serves as president of the ministerial association. The song leader has a master's in music and teaches at local college. Their singing is out of this world, a real argument against the instrument. But I know some churches who, if they have any singing, had better have a piano, or a good musician!—*Rose Temple, Wallowa, OR*

There is an Assembly of God minister here who has been "recycling" a lot of discouraged Church of Christ people, one of whom is a graduate of one of the schools of preaching, who was really down. The preacher said your article on Holy Spirit baptism confirmed the conclusion that he had reached on his own, causing him to decide not to renew his Assembly's license.—*Ivan Jameson, Austin, TX*

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NOTICES

Ray Miller, 4388 Rota Circle, Ft. Worth 76]33, who is confined to a wheelchair, will handle all your subscriptions and renewals for national magazines at no extra cost to you, and this includes special rates.

Gary Cummings, Box 92609, Lewisville, TX 75056, is interested in forming a peace fellowship among Churches of Christ, especially for pacifists and CO's. The purpose is to minister to them and their families in wartime and to share together in peacetime. He would like to hear from you.

Write to Pat Cavness, Box 409, Lampasas, TX 76550, for details on Carl Ketcherside's visit to that city, Oct. 31-Nov. 2.

Ouida, who by-the-way is doing just great (she is thankful for all the greetings especially to her), urges that you inform us of a change of address as early as possible. And you *must* give us BOTH your old and new addresses. Otherwise we have to write to you at your new address to learn where you moved from. This is because we do everything by zip codes, which is surely the mark of the beast.

We welcome about 140 new readers who join us with this fall issue. We ask those who have been sent the paper by someone else to give us a fair hearing and judge us by what you read and not by what you hear. Open-minded folk will surely read several issues before disposing of us as irresponsible.

You can help us to reach those who would be encouraged by what we are saying by sending us five names or more at only 2.00 per name per year.

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Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, TX 76201*

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